Invitation to States
Pilot Project on Improving Data Exchange Between Industry Certification Organizations and State Education and Workforce Longitudinal Data Systems

Background

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), in cooperation with a number of national and state partners, is sponsoring a project to explore how to expand and improve data exchange between industry certification organizations and state longitudinal data systems. The project is based on a multiple-year roadmap for exploring the development of a national data exchange clearinghouse (See attached Roadmap). Current industry partners include CompTIA and the Manufacturing Institute.

The Department of Education is also interested in the development and outcome of this project. Industry certifications and licensure are a growing part of the expected outcomes of career and technical education programs, and the Department is interested in the identification of solutions to the issues surrounding state collection of valid and reliable data. The Department is also interested in interacting with other federal agencies with similar interests, a goal this project will help meet.

Over the next year, the project will focus on raising awareness of the need for improving data exchange (Step 1 in the Roadmap). The project also will conduct a pilot between states and industry partners (Step 2 on the Roadmap) on how data can be effectively and securely exchanged and used for the benefit of both states and industry partners. This pilot is based on a recent Illinois and CompTIA project that demonstrated the feasibility of linking state and industry certification data.

Pilot Project

The pilot project will involve up to <u>five</u> states working with CompTIA and/or NAM to replicate and expand on the Illinois project over a one-year time period starting in December 2012.

- <u>CompTIA</u> is the largest vendor-neutral information technology certification organization with a variety of certifications such as A+, Network+, and Security+. See the following link: http://certification.comptia.org/getCertified/individuals.aspx
- <u>The National Manufacturing Institute</u> and the NAM-Endorsed Skills Certification System include 14 manufacturing certification organizations. The project will explore piloting with one or more. See the following link: http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/Education-Workforce/Skills-Certification-System/Certifications/Certifications.aspx

States and industry partners will conduct this work voluntarily with their own resources and will <u>not</u> be provided with funding assistance. ACTE and other partners will provide staff support in coordinating the project and developing a final report based on the results from the state pilots.

<u>Project Objectives</u>. The pilot project will have four major objectives:
- Confirm that multiple states can execute data sharing agreements with industry certification organizations for the purposes of performance reporting, consumer information and continuous improvement (see Roadmap).
- Explore data matching protocols using personal identifiers (e.g., first name, last name, geocode) from both industry certification organizations and states and develop recommendations for improving data matching.
- Explore the mutual benefits of data sharing partnerships between state and industry certification organizations.
- Develop recommendations for conducting further projects and next steps in the roadmap.

<u>Targeted Student Population for Data Exchange</u>. The project will require that state partners minimally match data records on postsecondary education students including community college students that are enrolled in credit courses and programs. States will be encouraged to include students enrolled in non-credit courses and programs if data are available.

<u>Work Tasks and Deliverables</u>. States will be asked to do the following:

- Establish a state project team with a project team lead consisting of representatives from state education and workforce agencies including a career and technical education (CTE) representative.
- Participate in one project planning webinar.
- Execute data sharing agreements with participating industry certification organizations.
- Develop a data matching protocol and conduct matching in cooperation with industry certification partners.
- Develop data tables on number of test takers and passage rates by student demographics including age, gender, and race/ethnicity and 2-digit, 4-digit, and 6-digit CIP. Develop additional tables by special population if available.
- Develop data tables on employment and earnings of targeted students comparing students with and without certifications.
- Develop a final presentation of pilot test results including: (1) data sharing agreement issues, (2) matching protocol and results, (3) data tables on test takers and passage rates and employment and earnings outcomes, (4) achieved benefits and lessons learned, and (5) recommendations for improving matching protocols and results, and (6) recommendation for additional pilot projects and moving to next steps in road map.
- Make a presentation on the pilot project to national advisory group in a webinar.

<u>Project Timelines</u>. The states working with CompTIA and the Manufacturing Institute will follow the following timelines:

- CompTIA--January 15 to October 15, 2013
- The Manufacturing Institute--March 15 to December 15, 2013

State Eligibility and Application Process and Deadline

ACTE will select up to five states that can meet the following project requirements:

- State education and workforce agencies agree to sign and execute a data sharing agreement with industry certification organizations based on the CompTIA data sharing agreement with Illinois (See Attachment)
- State data systems currently link postsecondary education and UI wage record data for performance reporting and improvement.
- State data systems can be used to match industry certification data with at least 2 years of individual student records for postsecondary students participating in credit courses and programs and at least one year of quarterly UI wage record data.

States wishing to apply for participation must submit a letter to ACTE by December 1, 2012 stating their interest in participating in the project and that they meet the project requirements and can devote the staff time necessary to complete all work tasks and deliverables according to the project timelines.

States can submit an application letter by e-mail to:

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